

The Conservation Exchange

A Communication Link for Idaho's Conservation Districts



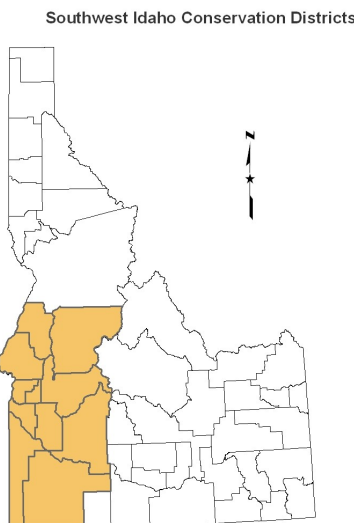
Welcome to the second issue of *The Conservation Exchange*, a collaborative newsletter to share programs, projects, technologies, and items of interest between Idaho's 51 conservation districts. This month features several districts in the Southwestern Idaho region, with a huge focus on project work, including urbanization issues, nitrate priority areas, and public outreach.

Happy Holidays to each of you and your families. May this coming year be filled with health, happiness, and harmonious conservation projects. Cheers!

This Issue Featuring: Southwestern Idaho

Conservation districts in this region include: Ada, Adams, Bruneau River, Canyon, Elmore, Gem, Owyhee, Payette, Squaw Creek, Valley, and Weiser River. All but two are aligned with county boundaries and have various jurisdictional interests, including private, state, federal, and tribal.

Twenty-eight percent of all farms in Idaho are located in the Southwestern Idaho region with approximately



7,294 individual farms occupying over 2.5 million acres of the private land base (2009 Ag Statistics).

Issues of common concern in the southwestern region include: urbanization of farmland, TMDL implementation for agriculture, Nitrate Priority Area implementation, lack of funding, irrigation water conservation, animal waste management, soil erosion, noxious weeds, and threatened and endangered species.

Several counties throughout Idaho are experiencing population growth and a shift of communities from rural to urban. The Ada Soil & Water Conservation District has been helping conservation districts evolve to meet the natural resource needs of these growing communities.

Despite a lack of funding for the proposed Urban Conservation Program (UCP), the Ada SWCD

Ada SCD—Paul Calverly, Chairman

Board of Supervisors made the decision to continue accepting requests for assistance from conservation districts across the state.

This decision has allowed the Ada SWCD Manager, Scott Koberg, to provide direct, timely, and much needed training and support to over 30 conservation districts and partners from Divisions 3, 4, 5, and 6. Training provided by the Ada SWCD has

been tailored to meet the requests of specific divisions or districts. This outreach approach has allowed other districts across Idaho to take what has been learned by the Ada SWCD in Ada County to more effectively adapt, grow, and evolve with the changing landscape.

If you are interested in training for your district, please contact:
Scott.Koberg@agri.idaho.gov
(208) 888-1890 x109

Canyon SCD—Jim Truesdell, Chairman

The Canyon Soil Conservation District and its partners, the Lower Boise Watershed Council, the Soil Conservation Commission, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, are initiating the Lower Boise River TMDL Program (LBRP) for sediment and nutrient management.

It is a 319 funded program that provides financial incentives to owner and operators of agricultural lands to apply conservation practices that protect and

enhance water quality. This program was initiated to address agricultural impacts to water quality by reducing sediment, bacteria, and nutrient levels in tributaries of the lower Boise River located within Canyon County, such as: Hartley Gulch, Lower Indian Creek, Mason Creek, Conway Gulch, and Dixie Slough.

It is anticipated that seven BMP projects could be implemented at \$50,000. Priority would be given to those land owners/projects where a specific program of long-term BMPs has been identified and antici-

pated load reductions have been calculated. For example, those properties that have been identified as Tier 1 lands, where construction of long-term irrigation system improvements would rank higher than projects proposing annual implementation efforts, such as PAM. This provides benefits to not only the individual land owner, but also the watershed as a whole, and the results can be better quantified over the long-term.

For more information:

Lori.Kent@id.nacdn.net
(208)454-8684 x126

**Owyhee CD—Charlie Chadez, Chairman**

The Owyhee Conservation District, in partnership with the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission, is in the second year of a three-year implementation project designed to reduce nutrient and sediment loading of the surface waters in our area, and to reduce the risk of excess nitrogen entering area groundwater.

The project has used IASCD, ISCC, and Clean Water Act 319 grant dollars to educate landowners of the potential risks agricultural production poses to water resources and to provide technical assistance and financial incentives to implement nutrient and irrigation water management. To date, 11,464 acres have been treated which has reduced sediment delivery by 6,900 tons, phosphorous runoff by 12,610 lbs, and nitrate leaching by 22,000 lbs.

For more information:

Delwyne Trefz@agri.idaho.gov
(208) 896-4544 x111

Bruneau River SCD—Mark Frost, Chairman

The Bruneau River SCD, in partnership with the ISCC, received a Clean Water Act 319 grant in 2009 to implement Nutrient and Irrigation Water Management in the Bruneau/Grand View Nitrate Priority Areas (BGNPA). The BGNPA project will focus on reducing the nitrogen loading from crop fertilization, crop plow down, and manure storage sites throughout the project area. These nitrogen sources have been listed as major nitrate sources in the Bruneau/Grand View area according to IDEQ (Nitrogen Loading Evaluation, 2008).

ISCC/BRSCD will track progress toward nitrogen reductions by evaluating nutrient management plans through soil tests, crop yields, and fertilizer inputs. In addition, Irrigation Water Management of participating landowners will be evaluated so that nutrient amendments are kept within the crop root zone. Project reporting will be respectful to landowners privacy and only amounts will be reported with no associated participant names unless a participant provides permission to do so.

For more information:

Barbara Foust
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(208)845-2299



The Adams Soil and Water Conservation District (ASWCD), in partnership with the Idaho Soil Conservation Commission, is implementing the Little Weiser River stream bank stabilization and rehabilitation project within Adams and Washington counties. The project goal is to prevent stream bank and stream channel erosion, thereby protecting valuable farmland from being washed down stream. Additional benefits of the project are flood channel improvement, irrigation diversion improvement, and wildlife habitat improvement through enhanced riparian areas.

The project is funded by the federal government through Section 319 of the

Adams SWCD—Ferrel Crossley, Chairman

Clean Water Act. The District received a grant by the Environmental Protection Agency through the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality. The current grant is for \$200,000 and the landowner's portion is 40% on top of that, or about \$140,000. The project's total fiscal impact is roughly \$340,000, with about \$132,505 attributed to 2009.

Most of the project funding stays in Adams and Washington counties. Local folks working for a landscape rock company, construction, sawyers, truck drivers, heavy equipment operators, laborers, and forestry all have benefit-

ted from the project in addition to the landowners.

Along with those directly involved, local hotels, restaurants, gas stations, hardware stores, nurseries, and other service industries have also benefitted from the project.

The District applied for and was chosen to receive another 319 grant for \$230,000 in 2010 to continue the project through the next five years.

For more information:
Lance.Holloway@agri.idaho.gov
(208)863-5232

<http://www.rivermenders.net/ivt/lwr/lwr.html>



Weiser River SCD—Monty Spiering, Chairman

The Water Quality Protection Project came into existence because of the need within Washington County to address the water quality issues related to nitrates in the groundwater. Education was the first component and has continued to factor in throughout the project. A Preliminary Investigation Report, filter strip project, and data from the Department of Agriculture were all just the beginning of catapulting the district into this demonstration project. Once the Department of Environmental Quality designated this area as the #1 nitrate priority area in the State, it was evident that practices such as surge irrigation, drip irrigation, filter strips, sediment basins and other tools needed to be installed.

Educating our local government, as well as individuals, to gain support for a 319 grant was one of the first steps to begin the process. Once that was accomplished it was time to apply for a 319 grant. As easy as that may sound, it was

very time consuming since we needed to convince IDEQ that we were capable of such a task. It is our desire that this report demonstrates our efforts and shows our accomplishments of taking on a job with many facets.

Continuing education is the primary goal of the District. We can accomplish this by being flexible and diligent in seeking avenues to educate. Newsletters, radio talk shows, displays and staying community minded has helped to keep our efforts in the forefront. Without education, who would have understood, become involved and supported us? Education, education, education is the key to a successful demonstration project. The need to understand and take ownership in ones

community begins with grade school and continues through adulthood. We

"I would like to declare it a success in that I believe all of the participants have come away with a better knowledge of their nitrogen and water uses" says Mike Hartnett 319 Project Chairman. "Our area was declared number one for high ground water nitrates in the State of Idaho and this project was designed to reduce nitrogen input into the ground water."

educate in the local schools and the adult community on an ongoing basis. This has helped us to partner with many individuals and agencies, so that the District can continue to be effective and a leader in conservation.

For more information:
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(208) 983-1046 x111

Weiser River BMP Funding Summary:

319 BMPS:	\$117,647	Nutrient Reductions:
WQPA BMPs:	\$19,064	37,699 lbs of Nitrogen
Participant contribution:	\$56,191	405 lbs of Phosphorus
<i>Total:</i>	<i>\$192,902</i>	



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Communicating Ideas for Idaho's Conservation Districts

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December 2009

Featuring: Southwestern Idaho

Ada SCD

Adams SWCD

Bruneau River SCD

Canyon SCD

Onyhee CD

Weiser River SCD

Return Service Requested

Streambank Restoration: Before and During Project



April 2009 – Lack of Riparian area allows the Little Weiser River to erode hay fields like a knife slicing through a warm stick of butter.

See story on Page 3



April 2009—Volunteers, along with Fish and Game Rivermenders Program, construct a willow weaving to protect bank from forthcoming spring runoff.

<http://www.rivermenders.net/ivt/lwr/lwr.html>